

REMARKS

Claims 1-5, 7-9 and 12-19 are pending in the present application. Claims 1, 15, and 17 are herein amended. No new matter has been entered. It is respectfully submitted that this Amendment is fully responsive to the Office Action dated April 17, 2006.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. §103

Claims 1 and 15-17 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as unpatentable over Applicant's Admitted Prior art ["AAPA"], in view of *Mikkonen*, U.S. Patent No. 6,885,633. Claims 2 and 18 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as unpatentable over AAPA and *Mikkonen*, in view of *Wang et al.*, U.S. Patent No. 6,587,970 ["*Wang*"]. Claim 1 is also rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as unpatentable over *Mikkonen*, in view of *Wang*. Claims 2-5, 7 and 12 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as unpatentable over *Mikkonen* and *Wang*, in view of *Ould-Ali*, U.S. Patent No. 5,649,091 ["*Ould-Ali*"], in further view of *Li et al.*, U.S. Patent No. 5,473,599 ["*Li*"]. Claims 8 and 9 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as unpatentable over *Mikkonen*, *Wang*, *Ould-Ali* and *Li*, in further view of AAPA. Claim 19 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over AAPA and *Mikkonen*, in view of *Ould-Ali*.

To expedite prosecution and clarify the subject matter of the present invention, Applicants hereby amend claims 1, 15, and 17 to preclude the sharing of more than one network address.

For example, claim 1 now recites a relay apparatus comprising a first basic unit "into which a peculiar network address is set" and a second basic unit "into which only the same

network address as that of said first basic unit is set". Applicants respectfully submit that this feature is not taught or suggested by the references cited by the Examiner. For example, *Mikkonen* teaches nodes 100a, 100b with different IP addresses IPA, IPB, IPC, IPD associated with each interface of the nodes [Fig. 1; column 3, lines 30-44]. Thus, the Examiner has failed to present a prima facie case of obviousness because the combination of references fails to "teach or suggest all the claim limitations," that is, all the features of the claimed invention. See MPEP 2143.

Moreover, Applicants respectfully submit that *Mikkonen* teaches away from the claimed invention, *e.g.*, different IP addresses. Therefore, if one were to combine the references as suggested by the Examiner, the resultant combination will suffer the problem disclosed on page 4 of the specification of the present application, namely increased line costs.

In view of the aforementioned amendment and remarks, Applicants respectfully submit that the rejection of claims 1 and 15-17 is not justified because the Examiner has failed to present a *prima facie* case of obviousness.

Claim 1 was also rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 over *Mikkonen* in view of *Wang*. However, in view of the discussion above, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw this reason for rejection.

Also, claims 2-5, 7-9, and 12-19, which depend from claim 1, should likewise be withdrawn in view of the above remarks by nature of dependency.

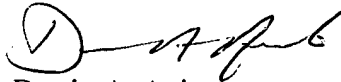
In view of the aforementioned amendments and accompanying remarks, Applicants submit that the claims, as herein amended, are in condition for allowance. Applicants request such action at an early date.

If the Examiner believes that this application is not now in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to contact Applicants' undersigned attorney to arrange for an interview to expedite the disposition of this case.

If this paper is not timely filed, Applicants respectfully petition for an appropriate extension of time. The fees for such an extension or any other fees that may be due with respect to this paper may be charged to Deposit Account No. 50-2866.

Respectfully submitted,

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